

Chapter 633 An Unwaveringly Loyal Dog

Cayson's patience had worn thin.

His features hardened as he told Reynolds, "Mr. Watts, I am currently the acting CEO of Universe Group, as I was before, and will be in the future. Loraine is the CEO, and as her subordinate, I refuse to betray her trust. Today, I will let slide the implications of your words. But if there's a next time, I won't hesitate to address it formally."

Reynolds's brows furrowed, his face a mask of perplexity.

He found it challenging to comprehend Cayson's unwavering loyalty towards Loraine.

Having interacted with numerous people, he presumed he had a thorough grasp of human nature. In his opinion, no one could resist the lure of money.

His mind wandered to Duran, a former director of an equivalent position to Reynolds, who had undertaken questionable tasks for him, shouldered the blame, and eventually landed in jail.

Upon some reflection, Reynolds deduced the crux of the matter. He hadn't managed to sway Cayson because he hadn't offered something sufficiently tempting.

Cayson's aspirations extended beyond mere possession of Loraine. He sought her affection!

Reynolds's countenance underwent a gamut of

transformations before he finally conjured a smug smile and adopted a patronizing tone to chide Cayson, "Cayson, you're being naive. Regardless of your noble intentions towards Loraine, she doesn't reciprocate your feelings. Why was she previously entwined with Marco? Because Marco used to be the sole CEO of the Bryant Group, far superior to you!

If you're satisfied with serving the Torres family, she'll never regard you with respect. However, once you wield real power, the dynamics will shift. Loraine will vie for your attention, and then, you can choose any woman you desire!"

Cayson's gaze turned frosty as he fixed his stare on Reynolds. Hearing him denigrate Loraine with such repugnant words, Cayson was awash with rage.

"Reynolds, refrain from projecting your sordid conjectures onto Lorrie. She is unlike other women, and besides, I have no interest in any other woman!" He abandoned any semblance of civility and addressed him directly.

With a derisive sneer, Cayson taunted, "Everything you've just said, do you dare repeat it in front of Mr. Torres? Reynolds, aren't you afraid I'll report your words to him?"

Reynolds was ambitious, but he was also circumspect and apprehensive. Under Aldo's pressure, he could only resort to subversive tactics like a rodent skulking in a dark alley.

Confronted with Cayson's steadfast refusal and counter threat, Reynolds found himself embroiled in a mix of frustration and indignation. Yet, he couldn't afford to relinquish this opportunity he'd been eyeing for ages.

He'd been biding his time for such a golden chance, an opportunity that was elusive. With Loraine away from the company and Aldo out of the picture, if he could sway Cayson, the acting CEO, he'd easily secure the advantages he coveted.

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resolute to shield Loraine, Reynolds decided not to hold any punches.

"You had your chance, and you spurned it. Don't blame me for being cruel."

Chapter 634 Work Partner

Meanwhile, Loraine had coordinated everything and relayed the final schedule for their countryside trip to Marco.

Without missing a beat, Marco took it upon himself to gather all necessary provisions.

They were about to visit an esteemed elder, an individual of high respect in Loraine's eyes, and Marco wasn't one to take the matter lightly.

He procured a variety of precious gifts and items that might come in handy during their rural visit. His small apartment was nearly overflowing with his thoughtful purchases.

Yet, Marco felt an uneasy sense that something was still missing, and he knitted his brows, pondering if he had overlooked anything.

Just as he was engrossed in his thoughts, the buzz of his phone on the table interrupted him. Picking it up, Marco saw that Doris was calling.

Under normal circumstances, if it were work-related, Doris would pass on information via Carl. Private calls were generally ignored by Marco.

However, in the current situation where Carl wasn't available, Doris naturally resorted to calling him directly on his personal number.

After a brief moment of deliberation, Marco answered the call. He had a clear understanding that Solar Company was doing

good, and under these circumstances, he doubted that Doris was calling about work.

Indeed, as he suspected, Doris's conversation revolved around personal matters. "Marco, where are you at the moment? I heard that your house was reclaimed by the Bryant family. Do you need my help to find a new place?"

Marco replied frostily, "There's no need, I've already bought a new house. Is there anything else you wanted?"

Doris hesitated for a moment, feeling slightly slighted. "Can't I show concern for you? Marco, we're friends, aren't we?"

However, her attempt to stir up sentiment from Marco didn't bear the results she wished for. Marco maintained strict boundaries between professional and personal relationships, leaving no room for Doris to exploit.

On the other end of the line, a shade of disappointment briefly crossed Doris's glamorous face, but she quickly regained her composure and shifted gears. "Marco, now that you're no longer with the Bryant Group, why not return to Solar Company and take the reins again? Everyone has been missing you over these years."

When Marco noticed that she had used the word 'everyone' instead of 'I', he couldn't remain impassive any longer. He replied composedly, "I will return when the time is right. Currently, I have my own plans."

Doris, trying to get him back to the Solar Company, asked, "What else do you have to do in Kitay? Marco, the moment you reveal your identity as the CEO of Solar Company, those Bryant family folks will surely rue their decision!"

Marco replied dismissively, "I don't have to make them regret anything. The moment I severed ties with the Bryant family,

they ceased to matter. What they think is of no consequence to me."

Besides, there was an individual in Kitay he deeply cherished.

Loraine meant a great deal to him, and nothing, not even the Solar Company, could hold a candle to her.

After all, he had painstakingly built the Solar Company from the ground up, and he believed he could establish another successful corporation if he desired. However, Loraine was irreplaceable. She was one in a million, and having lost her once, he swore never to let her slip away again.

He truly cherished the simple, intimate moments he currently spent with Loraine and eagerly anticipated their upcoming trip to the countryside.

Nevertheless, Marco was acutely aware that his secret identity as the CEO of the Solar Company was a ticking time bomb, ready to implode their current happiness at any moment.

He recognized the inevitability of disclosing the truth sooner or later.

Having learned from the consequences of previously keeping Loraine in the dark, he knew he had to find the right moment to reveal the truth. Otherwise, Loraine would never forgive him.

With this thought in mind, Marco replied composedly, "I won't be returning for now. Please maintain the status quo at the Solar Company."

"Marco..." Doris began to interject.

Interrupting her firmly, Marco said, "Doris, I regard you as a trustworthy professional ally. I trust you won't let me down."

With that, he ended the call.

Doris was left in shock, staring at the disconnected call screen as a wave of unease washed over her poised features.

She clutched her phone tightly, wrestling with her choices.

Nonetheless, in the next instant, she steeled herself and messaged her staff, "I'll be personally traveling to Kitay later. Make the necessary arrangements and ensure the trip remains confidential."

"Understood, Miss Hoffman."

Upon receiving the reply, Doris felt reassured and gradually became resolute.

She was not ready to give up on Marco, not by any means!

Simultaneously, Loraine's car pulled up outside Marco's residence.

She was there to pick up Marco.

Upon entering the house, Loraine was greeted by a room filled with various suitcases, an even greater quantity than when they had flown to Bluhm. They nearly occupied half the space.

She couldn't help but tease, "Marco, are we heading to the countryside or are you relocating? Why are there so many items? And how on earth are we going to transport all this?"

"I can handle it, I'll carry it," Marco reassured earnestly, momentarily considering, "I've never been to the countryside before, and I'm worried I might've overlooked something. Loraine, do you want to check if anything is missing?"

He approached this journey as if it were their honeymoon,



aspiring to make it perfect in every way.

Loraine chuckled and quipped, "You're in your probation period as my boyfriend, not a removal worker."

Nevertheless, she proceeded to open the suitcases, filtering out unnecessary items.

To her surprise, she observed that Marco had packed very few personal items. The majority were women's products, ranging from cosmetics to clothing and jewelry. The suitcases were brimming with various luxury brands, leaving Loraine dumbfounded.

From behind her, Marco awkwardly cleared his throat and said, "I feared these things wouldn't be available in the countryside."

Loraine was left speechless. On closer examination, she noticed that these items were all the latest seasonal products, some yet to be released, and some so exclusive that they were beyond the reach of ordinary shoppers.

A question sprouted in her mind. How had Marco managed to procure all these items?



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Chapter 635 To The Countryside

The shabby, tiny house was now filled with luxurious items that cost a fortune and seemed so out of place. Countless speculations whizzed through Loraine's mind. She even wondered if Marco had rallied his connections and borrowed the money to buy all this.

Marco, however, was completely in the dark on her speculations. He hurriedly explained, "I'd thought you'd like all these. Jimmie and Slater said these are what women need..."

Loraine let out a quiet sigh of relief as she heard this. So Marco's rich friends were the ones who got all the gifts. She had worried that Marco would let all the nonsense happening get to him and unreasonably splurge, then regret it later. So with this worry gone, she placed the items she didn't fancy aside and gave Marco a short speech on not spending money recklessly.

Despite that he found her speech amusing, Marco obediently agreed and offered to take her bags downstairs. After the slimmed-down pieces of luggage had been placed in the car one by one, he zoomed off.

Marco insisted on driving because he had heard the roads were bumpy and the distance was long. He told Loraine to rest in the passenger seat, and she did without argument. To her surprise, he'd gotten water and snacks prepared for her on the way.

Loraine's emotions were jumbled up. The change in Marco was stunning. Remembering that he used to be the indifferent type

who didn't care about others, she wondered what sort of growth he had gone through.

The roads to the western suburbs were said to be rough, but they had been renovated a bit over the years, making travel much easier. It didn't take long for the two to reach the western suburbs.

The scenery to the location was picturesque; a canopy of greenery and wide fields that went farther than the eye could see. Winds blew through the windows, making everything even more refreshing and pleasant.

Marco felt energized and happy, and he then came to the realization that the countryside wasn't as awful as it was made out to be. The navigation showed that their destination was half an hour away. However, by the time the car reached a station in the county town, Loraine said they needed to stop. Marco stared at the navigation screen in confusion. "Have we arrived?"

Loraine paused, then shook her head. "No. I want us to stop and buy some gifts before we move on. Then for the rest of the journey... we'd have to make it on foot. The car won't be able to go any further."

The tiny county town houses were bursting with special charm; green grapevines climbing on low walls, street-side market stalls along with a slightly run-down supermarket nestled into the corners. Then as Marco opened the door, the bumpy road lifted up a cloud of dust.

He became silent immediately, realizing the beautiful scenery was obviously best enjoyed afar and not up close. From the local infrastructure, it was clear life in this place was very inconvenient. As he thought about how Loraine had grown up here, Marco's heart filled with complex emotions, mostly

sympathy for all the experiences and challenges.

Loraine, on the other hand, didn't seem to mind and said, "I considered rebuilding the area. The locals, however, are against it. They never agreed... As I've spent years away, it seems they didn't trust me. However, with the success of the Universe Group now, I'm sure they'll trust me a bit more."

Marco nodded compassionately and opened his mouth to speak when a hesitant voice suddenly sounded from behind, "Loraine?"

He and Loraine turned and saw a woman dressed in a highly flashy manner. Her clothes were filled with glitters, making her almost blinding to the eyes. She wore vibrant and exaggerated makeup along with oversized sunglasses and multicolored hair. She was very... different.

Loraine squinted for a moment, trying her best to recall the person's name from her distant memories.

"Lillie Fisher?"

Loraine remembered her because she had always been dangling from Judie's feet, being her faithful little lackey. Lillie had always been right behind Judie, assisting Judie in her malicious deeds whenever she bullied Loraine.

Lillie took in Loraine's appearance from head to toe for a while then burst out cackling, a sinister smile etching into her heavily painted red lips. "So, it actually is you, Loraine! You've turned out to be quite something now, you dress so nicely, huh! It seems you found a rich man to stand behind you, right? You had his baby? I mean, for what other reason would he agree to spend on you..."

Her eyes turned mockingly towards Marco while she still addressed Loraine, "I never expected you to return with a man."

You're obviously completely shameless..."

Suddenly, a large gust of wind blew, and all the dust lifted into the air. Lillie finally got a clear view of Marco's face after, and in the next second her jaw dropped, along with her oversized sunglasses. She just stood there, frozen in shock.

Chapter 636 Jealousy

Lillie thought herself to be well-traveled and on a higher level than most in this impoverished rural area. She had been with a couple of good-looking men and most of the time boasted about how there was no man worthy of her. But the truth was, aside some movie stars, she had not really come across many men.

This was the first she was coming across a man of Marco's caliber. Tall and handsome, his face chiseled like a Greek statue, his eyes deep and mysterious, cold and captivating. She couldn't believe her eyes. How could such a beautiful man exist?

Lillie's face contorted in jealousy. What was even worse was that such a beautiful man was standing next to Loraine! It hurt more than not having him for herself. Lillie gritted her teeth. He had to be a gigolo Loraine was keeping with her money, there was no other explanation!

Terrible rumors and gossip about Loraine were already common in the village, so Lillie said with a sneer, "You truly are something, Loraine! You found such a good-looking man! Aren't you worried your sugar daddy would find out and abandon you though?"

She then paid no attention to Loraine's reaction and walked up to Marco, acting shy. She reached out to hold his hand as she continued degrading Loraine.

"Hey, handsome guy, you don't know, do you? That woman next to you is a total slut! She slept with every man she could find, and her reputation is completely ruined. She only has money because she throws herself at wealthy men. However, once

these men find out about her true character, she will soon be discarded and won't be able to give you any more money. Why don't you be with me instead? I don't have money, sure, but I'm a virtuous woman. I'll definitely be more suitable for you..."

Lillie continued senselessly spewing rubbish, completely oblivious to the deadly expression on Marco's face.

As the latter saw her about to reach out to him, he moved out of the way swiftly, as though she was a disease. She happened to slip in a mud puddle, lost her footing, and fell flat on her face, screaming. And no one came to her aid.

Lillie lay shocked on the ground for a couple seconds, then she lifted pitiful eyes to the nonchalant man above her and whined, "Handsome guy, how could you just let me fall?"

Marco's frown deepened as a wave of nausea hit him. He coldly replied, "I don't want to touch you. You're disgusting."

Lillie's eyes widened in shock. Completely ignoring the dirt on her clothes, she stood with her arms akimbo in a defiant manner and retorted, "Disgusting? How dare you? I'm in no way disgusting! I took a bath today, and I'm wearing the latest perfume too, you hear?"

The small county town was far from crowded, but there were still a couple of people hanging around the supermarket area. Shamelessly, Lillie proudly raised her voice for them to hear, with a sinister smile on her face, "Plus, I'm still a virgin! How could you compare me with Loraine? She's been used by multiple men! She's probably working as a sex toy for some old geezer now and is pregnant! If anyone is disgusting, it's her! If you can be with her, why can't you be with me?"

Loraine, at first, had no intentions of interacting with Lillie's nonsense. However, the more she heard the woman's words, the more an amused smile grew on her face. She hadn't been

around for a while, and she'd expected that with how small this place was, gossip and rumors would definitely be spread everywhere. Still, she had never expected such insane rumors about herself.

Pregnant? She and Marco had been married for three years, and during that time Marco had never laid a finger on her. So how would the pregnancy occur?

Adding to that, she knew no old geezer. Marco, the gigolo as Lillie said, had been the only man she'd been involved with.

Lorraine chuckled silently and enjoyed as the show unfolded and Lillie's imagination ran even wilder. Marco, on the other hand, seethed with rage. He couldn't believe that there could be a person with such a venomous mouth in such a simple, rustic village. Did anyone here have any idea where Lorraine had been over the years? All she had gone through? They dared to spread such disgusting rumors about her just like that? He couldn't help but wonder what horrors Lorraine had gone through living here.

Marco's heart ached for her past, and his eyes turned dark as he looked down at Lillie. In an authoritative and dismissive tone, he bellowed, "Apologize to Lorraine!"

Lillie subconsciously shivered under his piercing gaze. But her ignorance kept her fearless, she saw Marco as nothing more than a gigolo. So ignoring the warning bells at the back of her head, she refused to back down. "Why do I have to apologize? I'm only saying the truth! You can ask around the village. There's no one who doesn't know what sort of person she is. You're good-looking for sure, but you certainly have terrible judgment!"

Marco's face went completely dark as he heard this. Had it not been for the fact that she was a woman, he would have had her lifeless on the ground by now.

 +120 Points at most

Loraine did not want to cause issues in such a place. However, she couldn't stand by while Marco was disrespected. Her tone was curt as she addressed Lillie, "You won't apologize? Then remain there in the mud. Don't bother getting up."



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Chapter 637 Things Have Changed

Hearing Loraine's warning, Lillie's rage flared even more. She retorted, "Who do you think you are, threatening me? If I choose to get up, what can you do to stop me?"

As she attempted to rise, a pair of women's shoes suddenly advanced towards her hand, startling her into retreat even before being touched.

Loraine's expression remained impassive, neither haughty nor triumphant. It was as if she had absentmindedly squashed an ant.

Lillie was fuming. She clenched her teeth and tried to stand up once more, only to be repelled again.

She feared Loraine might actually kick or stomp on her.

After several futile attempts, Lillie ended up sprawled on the ground like a defeated bug. Previously, she had been the one tormenting Loraine, but now the tables had turned.

"Don't push your luck, Loraine!" Lillie hollered, her eyes blazing with fury. Unable to tolerate it anymore, she lunged at Loraine's feet, trying to topple her, regardless of the risk of injury to herself.

However, the moment she made contact with Loraine, Marco quickly pulled Loraine into his arms and repelled Lillie with a swift kick. Unlike Loraine's earlier intimidation, his actions bore real threat.

Lillie fell heavily onto the ground. Looking up, she saw Marco's face etched with anger, a countenance that suggested he could kill without hesitation. She recoiled in terror.

Balanced within Marco's embrace, Loraine glanced at Lillie with a mixture of disdain and cold amusement. Then she crouched down in front of her, her expression laced with mock sympathy.

"Do you still consider me the orphan you used to torment? Lillie Fisher, I didn't return today to seek revenge, and frankly, you're not worth my time. So, if you cease to trouble me, I'm willing to let this slide."

Individuals like Lillie only knew how to strut and oppress in a small village. Loraine refused to squander her time on such people.

Lillie froze instinctively, but then abruptly burst into a fit of hysterical sobbing.

"Loraine, you brazen harlot! You think you're superior just because you've ensnared a few men? You dare to bring him here to intimidate me, huh? Just you wait, I'll get Judie to set this right!"

Loraine found it amusing that Lillie still planned to enlist Judie's help, just as she did when they were children. Conversely, Marco's face darkened, and he demanded sternly, "Judie Cooper? Where is she?"

After all these years, Loraine had returned to the village radiant and successful, yet she was still being harassed like this. Marco couldn't help but dread the ordeals Loraine must have suffered in the past.

The idea of Lillie seeking Judie's help was laughable. If anyone was going to find Judie, it would be him to hold her

accountable for Loraine's past sufferings.

Lillie finally registered that the man accompanying Loraine was not one to be trifled with. She glanced warily at them and asked, "What do you want? I'm warning you, Judie won't let you off lightly..."

Before she could complete her sentence, Lillie's voice faltered, her gaze fixating on something with a look of avarice and longing in her eyes.

Loraine followed Lillie's gaze to her own wrist, where she sported a simple white gold ladies' wristwatch, a piece that easily cost two to three hundred thousand dollars. She had chosen it nonchalantly to match her attire.

Yet, gauging from Lillie's expression, Loraine was certain of what she was coveting. Lillie had her eyes on the watch.

Greedy individuals, albeit repugnant, were often simple to control.

With a knowing smile, Loraine delicately removed the wristwatch. Lillie's eyes followed the piece as if it was a succulent bone being dangled before a starving dog.

Loraine teasingly brandished the watch before Lillie and asked, "So, are you willing to tell me where Judie is now?"

A flicker of hesitation passed through Lillie's eyes, but she remained mute.

With a raised eyebrow and a relaxed voice, Loraine prodded, "This watch is worth two or three hundred thousand dollars, which is practically pocket change to me. Give me Judie's location, and it's all yours."

Upon hearing this, Lillie's eyes sparkled with unmistakable

greed, and she involuntarily licked her lips, her determination faltering.

"How...how can this watch be so pricey? You're trying to trick me!"

Loraine scoffed derisively, "Didn't you accuse me of ensnaring some wealthy men? Surely, twenty thousand dollars is nothing much, right?"

To most residents of this small town, twenty thousand dollars could equal a year's salary, but for Loraine, it was as negligible as twenty dollars.

Fuelled by jealousy, Lillie was now convinced that Loraine had indeed enticed some rich men. She couldn't help but wonder why the same fortune hadn't befallen her - she was attractive as well.

Taking advantage of Lillie's momentary distraction, Loraine sneered at her, "Well, suit yourself if you refuse to speak."

Saying this, she began to pocket the watch.

Aghast, Lillie blurted out in desperation, "Wait! I'll talk! Judie is at home, but not in the same place as before. After you left, she and her family moved to a new villa on the finest plot of land in the village!"

Regaining some of her brash confidence thanks to the perceived affluence of Judie's family, Lillie taunted, "Don't get too cocky, Loraine. Just because you've been away for a while doesn't mean you've hit the big time. Judie may be faring better than you now!"